8

Daily Life of the Fishing Village

Fishing families may have informal gatherings toward the end of the day. On a late summer afternoon, the family may sit in the open doorway of the house, for hedges, fences, the barriers, and trees are rare. The wife may be nursing her naked child. Her husband, a fisherman, has changed into his indigo blue and white striped kimono, a tall, broad, deeply tanned man. Next to him sits his mother, over 70 years old, her hands tattooed, as are those of all the old women. She is wearing a kimono of the same color, but of a dot pattern. They sit on unrolled mats. On the veranda, three or four men, unwashed and still in their work clothes, discuss the events of the day. A lacquer tray with tea cups is on the floor near them and the tea (as it so often is) may be cold. There is brown sugar to eat along with the tea. The grandmother may be economically smoking a half or a third of a cigarette in the typical Japanese pipe. As it grows later, the wife gets up, pours some water in the stone mortar, and smashes the sweet potatoes with the long wooden pole. The men continue talking for a while, then take their leave. The wife, her work at the mortar finished, goes into the dirt kitchen to start the evening meal.

The wife of the fisherman has worries that do not bother the farmer's wife. There is always the danger that her husband, or son, will not return, a real possibility, of which the frequency of widowhood in Minatogawa is proof. Every season, there is at least one instance of a fisherman who has either been lost, or whose delay in returning has provoked intense worry. If crews are still out when an unexpected storm arises, there is considerable tension in the village. Since the war, rescues at sea are more likely than before. The village headman quickly reports overdue boats. The American forces have created much good will in seeking fishermen lost at sea.

Women, on the other hand, have opportunities for leisure when the catch is light, or weather is unfavorable. At these times, they can busy themselves with other tasks, in the field, gathering stones, getting miscanthus, but they do not have the unremitting activity of the woman in the agricultural village. There is more visiting during the day than one observes in an agricultural village.

The fisherman, with or without land, tries to keep pigs and perhaps a few goats. In Minatogawa, the pens are often made of sandstone quarried here. Not only the floors and the sides, but the stalls are made of this material. One reason for this is the openness of the village and the danger that pigs will be killed in a storm. A typhoon may carry away the house, its owners having gone to the stronger house of a friend or relative, but pigs are an investment and an asset to be guarded.

Alcoholic Beverages

443
[273] Japanese and American canned beer
Japanese type sake (a light rice wine resembling sauterne)
Okinawan sake (awamori)

Miscellaneous

Charcoal sticks
[276] Brass and nickel plated Japanese pipes
Small dishes
[415] Sake bottles
Oil burners to keep mosquitos away
[416] Flashlights, bulbs, and batteries
Matches
Japanese and American tobaccos
Fishing lamps and the ika lamp (fishing villages only)

[437] Transactions are usually on a cash basis, although some customers pay at the end of the week. In one such store, the gross sales averaged ¥600 a day with a net profit of about 10%. (The yen is pegged at 120 to the US dollar). During the day and the early evening, the village
[366] stores are meeting places, especially if, like Hinatogawa, several together make up a small business center.

443 Supplies are delivered to village stores by truck or sometimes by
494 bus. Often the owner goes to the larger towns to buy. Young boys are an important cog in the distribution system. They deliver candies,
[851] cookies, and other small articles which are carried in five gallon lard tins on racks over the rear mudguard of their bicycles. They ride up to the store, count out their candies or cookies, receive payment, and cycle on to the next store over a route which includes several villages.
[262] These boys work out of larger towns like Itoman and Nago. Baking goods, bread (pan) really a sweet dough with a jelly-like filling, cookies and candies are distributed in this manner. Sometimes housewives make cookies and cakes to sell to village stores.

443 There is not much house to house selling or soliciting. Occasionally women come to the villages with a selection of ready made clothing or cloth. In Hinatogawa, an itinerant drug vendor periodically goes through the village ringing his bell, selling various Japanese patent medicines mainly for colds, headaches, constipation, and stomach aches.

444 Import stores (hyakuji), also operated privately, are a different
262 kind of enterprise than the village shop. They have been set up under
851 the American occupation. Larger wholesalers supply the village retailers. These stores deal in a restricted number of commodities, such as rice, flour, soy bean sauce, wheat, and cooking oils. Sales are made to villagers on a rationing system based on the number in the family, its
349 age distribution, pregnancy, and whether the head is engaged in heavy work. The intent of the import stores is to make food available, at reasonable cost, to those who cannot grow their own, or whose own produce

Table VIII, cont'd.

Crop	Yield per tan	Tons per acre
Cucumbers	1,570	42.4
Wax Melon	1,859	50.2
Tomatoes	2,789	75.5
Watermelons	1,557	42.0
'I' rush ('Bingo-i')	1,411	38.1
'I' sedge ('Shichitō-i')	1,715	46.3
Tea	197	5.32
Mandarin orange ('mikan')	1,183	31.95
Edible banana	1,629	44.0
Green manure crops	2,994	87.5
Sugar cane (cane weight)[1]	9,000	243.0

Use of Grass, Trees and Brush Southern Okinawa looks barren to the American observer---few trees break the skyline and great fields of long grass cover the hillsides. The comment heard most often is, "Why don't the Okinawans plow up the grass and plant crops, instead of letting all that land go to waste?" The only proper and truthful answer to this query, of course, is that the grass is utilized to the full and that none "goes to waste".

The "ubiquitous miscanthus" referred to by Glacken actually comprises many grasses, chief among which are 'susuku', 'kaya', and one known by the Okinawan name nā'ichū. 'Susuki' is used mainly for the making of brooms, which occurs in December after the flowering of this grass has turned the countryside from deep green to a cloudy whiteness. 'Kaya' is used mainly for the thatching of roofs, but is also fed to livestock. Among other plants of the wild land, or 'genya', are the 'mogusa' or fūchibā, used for moxibustion and as a vegetable in soups; the hirahēgusa, used to cure leech bites; and the warabinufūnii, or edible bracken fern.

The Japanese butter-bur is found in the 'genya', and is utilized as a tobacco substitute in hard times, and occasionally as food. The flowering ginger, or sannin, furnishes leaves for wrapping rice cakes, and fiber for the tying of bundles of sugar cane. The leaf of the inedible potato or m-bashi (Japanese, 'kuwazu-imo') was used by very poor people before the war as a wrapper for 'miso' paste, which they peddled throughout the countryside. The plant is still used to stop the bleeding of wounds. The lantana---known in Hawaii as "haole-koa"---furnished poles for house roofs, leaves for fodder, and beans for tea during famines. Numerous other grasses and herbs are used by the older generation for medicinal purposes, as can be seen by perusal of Tawada's excellent book, Okinawa Yakuyō Shokubutsu Yakkō, 2nd edition, Naha, 1951.

Almost all trees, which in Shimajiri means essentially those surrounding the houses, are used in some way above and beyond their major function as windbreaks in time of typhoons. The leaves of the yūna tree are a native

[1] This information is from the Kochinda-son Office.

261 262 Famine Food and Wartime Substitutes The standard famine foods on Okinawa have always been dried sweet potato chips or refuse from the making of starch, sago palm nuts and the pulp of the same palm. The latter two are eaten with restraint, as they contain small [252] amounts of an alkaloid poison. The sweet potato materials are made into soups, and the sago palm provides a type of flour for deep frying, or 'tempura'.

[137] During the last war, soups were also made from the stem of the plant Ligularia Kaempferia, known as 'tsuwabuki' in Japanese, and chiipappā in Okinawan. One Nanahan farmer related, "The chiipappā which I ate in Kin-son during the war was delicious, and one felt better after eating it. When I came back here, I tried our local variety, but it is bitter and inedible." The [252] giant African snail was used to alleviate famine just before the invasion. It was boiled in its shell, then de-shelled and the "snail juice" washed out with a bitter orange called shiisā. The meat was then fried with vegetables and the white part of a leek.

273 177 276 272 Japanese soldiers during the war taught the Okinawans how to make a strong liquor from sugar cane, as no real 'sake' or 'awamori' was then available. Tobacco was also scarce, and pine tree bark was substituted. Some people preferred to smoke the leaves of the 'mogusa' plant, which is also used for cautery. One very poor family in Nanahan still retains the practice. Tea could not be bought in the late pre-invasion period, and the beans of the lantana bush furnished a palatable substitute.

263 Uses of Sugar in the Home When a guest calls at an Okinawan farmer's home, he is served tea, black sugar chunks, and quite [574] often 'awamori'. Many other uses were related. It is used in batter for deep [757] frying; for cure of headache, sickness, and fainting spells; for a hangover; and when food is not delicious.